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AUTHOR Zaetta, Robert
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ABSTRACT

These guidelines were developed for administrators and teachers involved in bilingual/bicultural programs for children of limited English-speaking ability. They are designed to assist those developing such programs in the regular school curriculum as well as in summer programs. Though they follow the federal guidelines for Title VII bilingual/bicultural education, the guidelines presented here are also based on the latest research in bilingual/bicultural education and on actual observation of such programs. The following topics are covered by the guidelines; (1) curriculum, (2) staffing, (3) instructional materials, (4) student assignment and testing and (5) community involvement. (Author/PMP)

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GUIDELINES FOR BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL PROGRAMS

Dr. Robert Zaetta
Supervisor of Foreign Languages
Delaware Department of Education

ABSTRACT

The Title VII Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 clearly establishes the need for bilingual/bicultural education in the United States. Although the act was enacted for the purpose of giving local school districts the impetus for establishing locally-funded programs, it is doubtful that many districts, except in strongly committed areas, can maintain the number of federally-funded positions without state assistance. However, State Education Associations have almost been completely by-passed by the act and as a result have not exerted much control over the federally-funded projects in their states. When Title VII funds come to an end, SEAs will have to exert more leadership. These guidelines were written with the intention of giving school districts who have had the benefit of federal funds, as well as those that have not, the direction for implementing bilingual/bicultural programs, with SEA direction.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The following guidelines have been developed for the purpose of orientating administrators and teachers who wish to implement a bilingual/bicultural program for children of limited English speaking ability. They are designed to assist those implementing such a program in the regular school curriculum as well as in summer migrant programs. The development of these guidelines is wide-based; they follow closely the federal guidelines for Title VII bilingual/bicultural education, but they are also based on the latest research on bilingual/bicultural education and on site observation of such programs with advice from those actively involved in those programs. As such, they take into consideration both theory and practice and serve as a starting point for program development.

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GUIDELINES
for
BILINGUAL EDUCATION

I. Curriculum

The basic components of the bilingual/bicultural curriculum are:

A. Language

There are many levels of language acquisition between the monolingual and bilingual individual. The range extends from one who may speak only a variant form of the language to one who may be able to communicate with equal facility in the standard form of two languages or more. For children who have a different linguistic and cultural background, their language dominance (the language of greatest fluency) is first determined, and instruction in the basic subjects is provided in that language. For children who have no knowledge or a limited knowledge of English, this practice facilitates learning while they are making a gradual transition into English and reduces the likelihood of linguistic and cultural shock. The language arts portion of the bilingual program, then, includes at least two language components: instruction in the native language and in English as a second language (ESL). Instruction in the language arts of their native language provides the students with the communicative skills of their home environment, allows them to proceed with sequentially more complicated concepts, and allows for entry into reading, which research indicates

is best introduced through the native language of the student. English-speaking students may also participate in this component of the bilingual program on a volunteer basis to enrich their language learning experience.

The ESL component is designed for students who have little or no knowledge of English and need to learn to understand spoken English. After they have mastered basic sentence patterns and vocabulary and have achieved a certain oral language competency, they begin to work in an English basal reading program. Research shows that it is best to present the native language and English separately in order to arrive at a coordinate bilingual (one who does not demonstrate interference between the two languages). For students with little knowledge of English, concepts presented in their native language can later be presented in English to strengthen the concepts and facilitate the learning of English. Students remain in the ESL Program until they are prepared to proceed with the school's regular English language arts program.

B. Other Components of the Bilingual/Bicultural Curriculum

Instruction in the basic subjects should be provided in the native tongue of the student, although at times this can be managed with an English-speaking teacher and a bilingual aide. As bilingual implies the use of two languages, bicultural implies familiarity with two cultures, although language and culture are inseparable. Where instruction in the native language will facilitate the learning of concepts, presentation of the native culture in a positive way serves to give culturally different children a sense of self identity and pride in order to develop

a good self-image. The importance of this is demonstrated in studies showing that students with a low self-esteem often underachieve.

Social studies, music and art lend themselves particularly well in informing culturally different children of their heritage. These subjects also provide an opportunity for the children of the two cultures to share information about their cultural backgrounds. Through the social studies component, the students learn about the historical contributions and cultural characteristics of all ethnic groups involved in our multi-cultural, multilingual world. In music the students learn songs of their native land as well as the basic elements of rhythm, melody, form and interpretation; in the study of art, learning activities are included which correlate with the study of all cultures. It should be stressed that the purpose of a bilingual/bicultural program is not to separate children of different ethnic origin from each other but to give each a sense of identity and the means to live within their own environment and the wider one.

II. Staffing

To insure the success of the bilingual/bicultural program, adequate staffing and properly-trained personnel are important. The duties of coordinator, curriculum specialist, evaluator, bilingual teacher, counselor, paraprofessional, psychologist and visiting teacher may be shared, but all are important in a bilingual program. The personnel must have an understanding and appreciation of the history, language, culture, and individual

characteristics of the ethnic group with which they are working. All must possess skills in interacting positively with minority students and adults. In addition to their knowledge of subject matter, the teacher in a bilingual program must have a native or near-native proficiency in the learner's language, be cognizant of the theories of second-language learning as well as methods and techniques of teaching a first and second language, and accept variant forms of the minority language as normal communication. Since teachers can expect the student population to have differing backgrounds as well as different levels of language and subject knowledge, teachers will have to be aware of individual differences and vary their teaching strategies accordingly. Also, commercially-produced materials will often have to be adapted by the teacher to the situation at hand. Since the bilingual movement is relatively new, much of the training of personnel will have to be on site, and strong, local teacher inservice programs will have to be provided.

III. Bilingual/Bicultural Materials

At present there are bilingual/bicultural materials being produced locally, commercially and by dissemination centers. The problem facing the administrator, curriculum specialist, and teacher is whether these materials are suitable to their situation. Before adopting materials, it is a good practice to visit a school employing them in order to obtain their evaluation. The following checklist provides a guide to the acquisition of materials:

1. Are they factually accurate?
2. Are they timely?
3. Are they geared to the interest of the target group?
4. Are they appropriate to the language level of the target group?
5. Are they consistent with the natural order of language learning?
6. Do they contain instructions written in both languages?
7. Do they contain a bibliography for the teachers to use?
8. Do they contain provisions for teaching strategies?
9. Do they provide for continuous evaluation?
10. Are they written in terms of performance objectives?
11. Are they well organized and easily understood?
12. Do they have social and historical significance for the target group?
13. Do they promote cultural richness?
14. Do they portray people and events fairly?
15. Do they cut across subject areas?
16. Do they place value on the affective as well as the cognitive domain?

IV. Student Assignment and Testing

At present no single test is reliable for testing the I.Q. of linguistically/culturally different children. Cultural bias and linguistic obstacles normally make these children score lower. For this reason, several types of measurements need to be employed, especially non-verbal ones. When administering these tests, it is best to employ experts on testing from both cultures. As mentioned previously, linguistically/culturally different children

will have wide-ranging levels of attainment in all areas and most of their needs will have to be assessed in the classroom by the teacher. Behaviors that seem unusual for personnel accustomed to dealing with American children may be inherent in the culture of the minority student and can better be assessed by personnel familiar with that culture. For example, what may be construed as shyness, may be nothing more than the learner's demonstrating respect for the adult, and what may be construed as laziness, may be the learner's reflecting the values of a society that does not emphasize competition. For this reason, cultural differences must be considered before placing these children in EMR classes.

V. Community Involvement

Leaders of both communities are included in the planning of a bilingual/bicultural program in order to define clearly the goals and expectations of the program. Provisions must be made to overcome language barriers. Cooperatively, the school and community decide on a transitional or maintenance program within the available resources. The goal of the former is to terminate bilingual instruction when the student becomes proficient in English while the latter maintains the student's skills in the native language throughout the educational process. Establishment of a Parent Advisory Board facilitates communication between the school and community and provides the community with information on the progress and problems of the program. In order to eliminate formality, the community is encouraged to visit classes, participate in curriculum development, and hold its traditional festivals in

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the schools. In addition, adult education programs are prov'ded to the community in the schools attended by the children. Members of the minority community are used as resource persons for the teaching of social studies and culture and as models of achievement for the children.